



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
<http://lachildrenscommission.org>**

Monday, November 18, 2013

10:00 AM

AUDIO LINK FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (13-5485)

Attachments: [AUDIO](#)

Present: Chair Geneva Berger, Vice Chair Susan F. Friedman, Vice Chair Steven M. Olivas Esq., Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, Commissioner Candace Cooper, Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Sydney Kamlager, Commissioner Helen Kleinberg, Commissioner Adrienne Konigar-Macklin, Commissioner Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW and Commissioner Martha Trevino-Powell

Excused: Commissioner Ann E. Franzen, Commissioner Dr. Sunny Kang and Commissioner Becky A. Shevlin

Call to Order. (13-5351)

The meeting was called to order at 10:17 a.m.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Introductions of November 18, 2013 Meeting attendees. (13-5350)

Self-introductions were made.

2. Approval of the November 18, 2013 Meeting Agenda. (13-5352)

On motion of Vice Chair Steven M. Olivas, seconded by Commissioner Helen Kleinberg, unanimously carried, (Commissioners Franzen, Kang and Shevlin being absent), this item was approved. Commissioner Kamlager was not present during the vote taken for this item.

3. Approval of the minutes from the Meeting of November 4, 2013. (13-5353)

On motion of Commissioner Adrienne Konigar-Macklin, seconded by Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, unanimously carried, (Commissioners

Franzen, Kang and Shevlin being absent), this item was approved. Commissioner Kamlager was not present during the vote taken for this item.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

II. REPORTS

4. Chair's report for November 18, 2013 by Geneva Berger, Chair. (13-5358)

Chair Berger reported the following:

- This year the Commission will hold its Holiday Luncheon Celebration on December 16, 2013 at Kendall's Brasserie following the Commission's regular meeting. Commissioners please RSVP to staff at your earliest convenience. A "Save the Date" was e-mailed by staff last week.
- The next New Commissioner's Orientation is scheduled for December 5, 2013, at 1:00 p.m. at the Hall of Administration. Commissioners interested in attending can RSVP to staff.

Commissioner Friedman added that on Thursday, November 21, 2013 at 6:30 p.m., a Rally and March Against Child Sex Trafficking will be held in the Compton and Lynwood area. This event was partially organized by Second District Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas.

By common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

5. DCFS Director's report for November 18, 2013 by Philip Browning, Director, DCFS. (13-5359)

Director Browning reported the following:

- DCFS has been audited by the State of California regarding overstays at the Emergency Response Command Post (ERCP). DCFS was notified that daily penalties will be applied for every day a child stays over the allowed time limit. The State has suggested the County open another facility similar to MacLaren Children's Center. The increase in overstays is partially attributed to the significant rise in the number of hotline calls received reporting a child in danger. Staff members from the State are evaluating the ERCP's current practices to assist in finding a solution. The issue of overstays is not isolated to Los Angeles County, other jurisdictions are experiencing this as well. Family finders are located in each of the field offices to assist with finding placement for children.

- The Children's Social Worker's (CSW's) Union has not yet signed its agreement partly due to concerns with case overload to workers. The Union recently filed a lawsuit; DCFS is currently in the process of consulting the Chief Executive Office on this matter. 150 additional CSW's are currently undergoing the DCFS hiring process which will help with reducing caseloads; however, it will take time.
- DCFS Contracts must either be a Sole Source contract or go through a Request For Proposal (RFP) or Request for Statement of Qualification (RFSQ) Process. A number of different programs are being evaluated in terms of programming. DCFS must be in compliance with the County and State's requirements when contracting. The most recent Safe Children and Strong Families (SCSF) RFP included Family Preservation Services. There were 315 proposals received with approximately 117 being for Family Preservation. The proposals received were provided to three independent entities for evaluation. The proposals are rated with the highest weight placed on the "approach" criteria. Many of the proposals did not describe well what services were being provided. Notices were recently sent out regarding the results of the SCSF contracted programs RFP. Some of the recipients of these notices were disappointed with the results and were invited to review their scored material. The decision ultimately lies with the Board of Supervisors. The deadline for contract decisions is in June of 2014. An extension on the existing Family Preservation contracts is being sought. It was difficult to project funding streams for the current year partially due to Realignment.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Director Browning explained with the following:

- The RFP was evaluated by individuals from within DCFS and various County Departments. Each proposal was evaluated by three individuals.
- To clarify information provided at the last Commission meeting, there is one Faith-Based provider and five African American agencies in Service Planning Area 6 that were not eliminated from the SCSF RFP.
- The placement of newly-hired Social Workers was based on the caseload equity model.

By common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

III. PRESENTATION

6. Overview of the combined impact of the Child Welfare Realignment and Title IV-E Waiver to at-risk children and families in Los Angeles County.

- Martha Matthews, Director of the Children's Rights Project, Public Counsel Law Center (13-5354)

Ms. Matthews provided a brief overview of her organization and presented the following:

- **Realignment is a policy that localizes funding and decision making for county foster care and child welfare systems. In Los Angeles County, the impact of Realignment will be amplified by the County's Title IV-E Waiver (Waiver), renewal of which is currently pending. Realignment plus the Waiver presents the County with crucial decision points that will have a major impact on child safety and well-being. A Workgroup was formed to evaluate the effects of Realignment to children in the County's child welfare system.**
- **Prior to Realignment, counties received specific funding allocations for specific programs. Decisions regarding the allocation of funding within counties' child welfare systems are no longer made by the State and the current practice provides Counties the discretion to shift funds within foster care and child welfare services so long as children receive benefits and services required by federal and state law.**
- **Prior to the Waiver, counties could only spend Title IV-E funds on youth in out-of-home care who met specific criteria, and counties would receive a reimbursement percentage from the federal government on every dollar the State spent on out-of-home care for federally-eligible children. With the Waiver, counties are able to allocate federal funds across foster care and child welfare services and programs as they deem appropriate.**
- **Fiscal incentives created by the combined Realignment and Waiver include lowering the number of children entering the foster care system, reducing the length of time children are in the system, reducing placements costs and improving coordination and cost-effectiveness across child service systems.**

- Possible unintended outcomes that may occur as a result of the combined Realignment and Waiver include the following:
 - A decrease in funding for non-mandated programs
 - Individuals who should be in the child welfare system may be kept out. Relative caregivers may be diverted to probate court for guardianship which creates unfunded or under-funded relative placements
 - Premature family reunifications or finalization of adoptions
 - Elimination or decrease in specialized care rates for children with special needs

Ultimately, lack of decisions or decisions made based on short-term cost savings may result in poor outcomes.

Recommendations

- Ensure transparency and stakeholder input in child welfare fiscal and program decisions. County Departments should work together to create a DCFS budget 'transparency portal' to give stakeholders clear and meaningful information about DCFS's fiscal decision-making.
- Ensure fiscal and program flexibility in ways that benefit children and families. The combined Realignment and Waiver were intended to give child welfare systems flexibility to better serve children and families. The County could use fiscal and program flexibility to fund all relative placements equally regardless of a child's Title IV-E eligibility, and promote housing stability for youth 18-21 through up-front funding for Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) move-in costs.
- Consider creating a reserve account. The Board of Supervisors (Board) should explore exercising the county option created by the Realignment statute to create a reserve account of up to 5% of the County's protective services subaccount allocation.
- Track outcomes. The Board should request that DCFS develop and implement methods of using C-CFSR (California Child and Family Services Review) system to monitor impact of Realignment + Waiver on key child safety and permanency indicators.

By common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

IV. MISCELLANEOUS

Matters Not Posted

7. Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (13-5360)

There were none.

Announcements

8. Announcements for the meeting of November 18, 2013. (13-5361)

Public Comment

9. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (13-5362)

The following members of the public addressed the Commission:

**Sadra Larson, Bienvenidos
Dr. Matt Harris, Project Impact
Maxine Diggs, Personal Involvement Center
Ritchie Geisel, Bienvenidos
Martine Singer, Para Los Niños
Stephen Hall, Guidance Community Development Center
Bruce Rubenstein, Former DCFS Deputy Director**

10. **Adjournment**

Adjournment of the meeting of November 18, 2013. (13-5363)

The meeting was adjourned at 12:32 p.m.